



Department of Agriculture

Overview

Department Head

Christy Clark, Acting Director

Article XII, section 1, requires the legislature to provide for the Department of Agriculture to "protect, enhance, and develop all agriculture." The constitution also allows for special levies "for disease control and indemnification, predator control, and livestock and commodity inspection, protection, research, and promotion."

Department Duties

Regulation/Licensing	Oversight and Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulates and licenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities that condition agricultural seed and assesses fees on certain sales Produce/commodity dealers and commodity warehouses, including use of bonds and claims against bonds Regulates fertilizers and licenses distributors Registers and regulates apiaries Licenses, inspects, regulates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial pesticide applicators and dealers Plant nurseries Commercial feed Pet foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a testing laboratory for certifying grade or protein of grains Shares with the Department of Environmental Quality a duty to inspect and regulate hazardous waste pesticides and pesticide container recycling Provides inspectors and graders for agricultural products Oversees and provides management help to control pests and weeds Collects and publishes statistics on ag products and allied interests' production/marketing Assists and promotes the organization of farmers' institutes, societies, and the holding of fairs, livestock shows, or other ag exhibits Helps devise and maintain distribution systems May inspect produce under Montana Produce Act May maintain a market news service and act as a clearinghouse for producers and consumers Retains appraisers for losses insured by the Board of Hail Insurance

Boards or other entities assigned to the Department of Agriculture

With appointments by Governor:

- Board of Hail Insurance, [2-15-3003](#) and Title 80, ch. 2, [part 2](#), MCA
- Montana Agricultural Development Council, [2-15-3015](#) and Title 90, ch. 9, [part 2](#), MCA
- Montana Alfalfa Seed Committee, [2-15-3004](#) and Title 80, ch. 6, [part 11](#), and ch. 11, [part 3](#), MCA
- Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, [2-15-3002](#) and Title 80, ch. 11, [part 2](#), MCA

Boards or entities attached to the department with department appointments:

- Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council, [80-7-805](#), MCA
- Montana Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Advisory Council, [80-7-904](#), MCA
- Organic Commodity Advisory Council, [80-11-601](#), MCA
- Montana Potato Advisory Committee, [80-11-510](#), MCA

- Montana Pulse Crop Advisory Committee, [80-11-510](#), MCA
- Advisory Council on Special Pesticide Problems, [80-8-108](#), MCA (allows department to set up council, but it hasn't)

Legislative Audits

- Financial-Compliance Audit, [19-21](#), May 2020. No recommendations.

Economic Affairs Interim Committee Areas of Interest

- **Value-Added Roadshows:** Department of Agriculture coordinates these visits to spotlight food and ag business throughout the state and promote adding value to Montana's high-quality ag commodities. Department collaborates with the Governor's Office to promote value-added ag. Committee members are welcome to join, but event details are not publicly available to maintain small group sizes and for security reasons.
- Department of Agriculture was recently approved for a \$500,000 grant through the USDA's National Institute of Food & Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) program. The department will use the funds to provide vouchers for mental health/therapy appointments to Ag producers and partner with MSU to develop public service announcements.

Department of Agriculture Biennium Budget for FY 2022 and FY 2023

Divisions	FTE	2023 Biennial Budget			Proprietary*	Total All
		General Fund	State Special Revenue	Federal Special Revenue		
Central Services	19	\$550,946	\$2,757,513	\$258,507	\$270,439	\$3,837,405
Agricultural Sciences Division	61.8	\$419,761	\$17,110,167	\$1,998,028	\$0	\$19,527,956
Agricultural Development Division**	37.27	\$3,995,949	\$16,099,019	\$282,589	\$2,460,384	\$22,837,941
Growth Through Agriculture***		\$2,989,878	\$1,219,564			
Wheat and Barley****			\$9,801,094			
Grain Lab**			\$2,814,952			

Notes: Chart reflects current budget authority, which includes House Bill 2, federal budget amendments, and statutory authority as of 07/06/2021.

* **Proprietary** funds include the Hail Insurance Program

** The **Agricultural Development Division** includes Growth through Agriculture, Wheat and Barley, and the Grain Lab budgets, but each are listed separately for informational purposes.

*** **Growth Through Agriculture** includes HB 2 appropriations and HB 52 funding under 15-35-108, MCA

**** **Wheat and Barley** includes grant authority for the Wheat and Barley Committee (80-11-205, MCA)